

## State B Boys: Saint George's eliminated by Adna after Northeast 2B League MVP Shawn Jones gets into foul trouble

Updated Wed., Feb. 28, 2024 at 11:05 p.m.

By **Dan Thompson** The Spokesman-Review

The St. George's Dragons' return to the State 2B boys basketball tournament was short-lived.

With Northeast 2B League MVP Shawn Jones in foul trouble, the seventh-seeded Dragons weren't able to keep up with the 10th-seeded Adna Pirates, who broke the game open in the second half for a 70-47 victory on Wednesday night at the Arena.

Adna (20-7) advanced to face No. 1 seed Columbia (24-0) in the quarterfinals at 5:30 p.m. Thursday.

St. George's (20-8) was eliminated from the tournament in its first trip to state since finishing third in 2020.

"They beat us to a bunch of offensive boards in the second half," Dragons coach Ryan Peplinski said. "... They did a good job taking away any sort of run we could make."

The Pirates shot 49% from the field and outrebounded the Dragons 33-31 while grabbing 13 offensive rebounds. Braeden Salme, a 6-foot-2 senior, finished 11 of 26 from the field – he took nearly half of Adna's 53 shots – and made 5 of 6 free throws.

"He's a problem to match up with," Peplinski said of Salme. "He's really good off the bounce. He's got a great medium-range game. He's really good in the post, really strong."

Salme had 10 points in the first half, during which the teams traded the lead six times. Adna built a quick six-point lead to open the second half, but three Dragons juniors – Jones, Mason Zarlingo and Elden Pierce – pulled them back within 33-31.

But things began to unravel for the Dragons soon after that.

Jones picked up his fourth foul with 3:05 left in the third quarter, forcing him to sit. The Pirates scored the next 13 points, a run capped by a 3-pointer by freshman Grayson Humphrey, who had two in the game and finished with six points. With St. George's trailing 46-33, Jones re-entered to begin the fourth quarter, but he lasted just 2 minutes before picking up his fifth foul trying to follow his missed shot in the lane. Adna went on a 7-2 run to push its lead to 20 points, and the Dragons didn't have any more answers.

"He's kind of our guy, or one of them," Peplinski said of Jones. "He's important to have on the floor, but that happens. That's basketball. You've got to find a way."

Jones finished with seven points on 1-of-10 shooting from the field. Zarlingo led the Dragons with 11 points, and Pierce added 10 points and grabbed nine rebounds. St. George's shot 30% from the field.

"We just weren't connected (offensively)," Peplinski said. "We were segmented, and it seemed like we had a tough time getting into our sets. The ball stopped too often, and that hurt us."

The Dragons' two seniors, Kayden Gu and Robert Witmer and Kayden Gu, finished with seven and five points, respectively.

Adna junior Gavan Muller scored 15 points on 5-of-6 shooting from the field and grabbed six rebounds. Teammates Lane Johnson and Jens Neilson scored nine points apiece. Adna is seeking its first state championship.

**Toutle Lake 64, Tonasket 46:** The sixth-seeded Ducks (21-6) eliminated the 14th-seeded Tigers (13-11). Toutle Lake advance to play No. 4 Lake Roosevelt on Thursday in a quarterfinal matchup at 3:45 p.m.

**Wahkiakum 76, Tri-Cities Prep 57:** Zakk Carlson scored 25 points and the 12-seeded Mules (20-6) eliminated the fifth-seeded Jaguars (18-5) in a State 2B loser-out game on Wednesday at the Spokane Arena. Blake McClure led Tri-Cities Prep with 21 points. Wahkiakum advances to the quarterfinals to play No. 3 Colfax on Thursday at 7:15 p.m.

**Northwest Christian 59, Chief Leschi 53:** Avi West scored 22 points and the ninth-seeded Crusaders (20-7) eliminated the eighth-seeded Warriors (19-8). Mickey Lara led Chief Leschi with 19 points. Northwest Christian advances to play No. 2 Napavine in a quarterfinal at 9 p.m.